

## Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method of facilitating the sending of mail from a restricted communications network, said method comprising:

automatically checking periodically by a communications unit external to a restricted communications network whether mail of the restricted communications network is to be sent; and

retrieving by the communications unit the mail from the restricted communications network, in response to there being mail to be sent.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the automatically checking comprises sending a request from a program of the communications unit to a program of the restricted communications network inquiring as to whether there is mail to be sent, and wherein the sending of the request is via an inbound connection from the communications unit to the restricted communications network over an available port.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the retrieving comprises having the program of the restricted communications network serve the mail to the program of the communications unit via the available port.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the automatically checking comprises sending a request from a program of the communications unit to a program of the restricted communications network inquiring as to whether there is mail to be sent, and wherein the program of the restricted communications network checks a data structure to determine whether there is mail in the data structure to be sent.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the retrieving comprises having the program of the restricted communications network provide the mail in the data structure to the communications unit.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising providing the mail to the data structure.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the providing is performed by a queue program of the restricted communications network, and wherein the queue program receives the mail from another program of the restricted communications network, said another program capable of receiving mail from one or more communications units of the restricted communications network.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising forwarding the mail from the communications unit to one or more receivers.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein a receiver of the one or more receivers comprises an intended recipient of the mail.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein a receiver of the one or more receivers comprises an intermediary to facilitate forwarding the mail to an intended recipient of the mail.

11. The method of claim 8, wherein the forwarding comprises parsing the mail into one or more messages and sending the one or more messages to the one or more receivers.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the manner in which a message is sent to a receiver is dependent on the type of receiver.

13. A system of facilitating the sending of mail from a restricted communications network, said system comprising:

means for automatically checking periodically by a communications unit external to a restricted communications network whether mail of the restricted communications network is to be sent; and

means for retrieving by the communications unit the mail from the restricted communications network, in response to there being mail to be sent.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the means for automatically checking comprises means for sending a request from a program of the communications unit to a program of the restricted communications network inquiring as to whether there is mail to be sent, and wherein the sending of the request is via an inbound connection from the communications unit to the restricted communications network over an available port.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the means for retrieving comprises means for having the program of the restricted communications network serve the mail to the program of the communications unit via the available port.

16. The system of claim 13, wherein the means for automatically checking comprises means for sending a request from a program of the communications unit to a program of the restricted communications network inquiring as to whether there is mail to be sent, and wherein the program of the restricted communications network checks a data structure to determine whether there is mail in the data structure to be sent.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the means for retrieving comprises means for having the program of the restricted communications network provide the mail in the data structure to the communications unit.

18. The system of claim 16, further comprising means for providing the mail to the data structure.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the means for providing comprises a queue program of the restricted communications network, and wherein the queue program receives the mail from another program of the restricted communications network, said another program capable of receiving mail from one or more communications units of the restricted communications network.

20. The system of claim 13, further comprising means for forwarding the mail from the communications unit to one or more receivers.

21. A system of facilitating the sending of mail from a restricted communications network, said system comprising:

a communications unit external to a restricted communications network to automatically check periodically whether mail of the restricted communications network is to be sent, and to retrieve the mail from the restricted communications network, in response to there being mail to be sent.

22. An article of manufacture comprising:

at least one computer usable medium having computer readable program code logic to facilitate the sending of mail from a restricted communications network, the computer readable program code logic comprising:

check logic to automatically check periodically by a communications unit external to a restricted communications network whether mail of the restricted communications network is to be sent; and

retrieve logic to retrieve by the communications unit the mail from the restricted communications network, in response to there being mail to be sent.

23. The article of manufacture of claim 22, wherein the check logic comprises send logic to send a request from a program of the communications unit to a program of the restricted communications network inquiring as to whether there is mail to be sent, and wherein the sending of the request is via an inbound connection from the communications unit to the restricted communications network over an available port.

24. The article of manufacture of claim 23, wherein the retrieve logic comprises logic to have the program of the restricted communications network serve the mail to the program of the communications unit via the available port.

25. The article of manufacture of claim 22, wherein the check logic comprises send logic to send a request from a program of the communications unit to a program of the restricted communications network inquiring as to whether there is mail to be sent, and wherein the program of the restricted communications network checks a data structure to determine whether there is mail in the data structure to be sent.

26. The article of manufacture of claim 25, wherein the retrieve logic comprises logic to have the program of the restricted communications network provide the mail in the data structure to the communications unit.

27. The article of manufacture of claim 25, further comprising provide logic to provide the mail to the data structure.

28. The article of manufacture of claim 27, wherein the provide logic is of a queue program of the restricted communications network, and wherein the queue program comprises logic to receive the mail from another program of the restricted communications network, said another program capable of receiving mail from one or more communications units of the restricted communications network.

29. The article of manufacture of claim 22, further comprising forward logic to forward the mail from the communications unit to one or more receivers.

\* \* \* \* \*